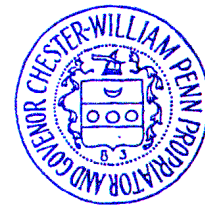




THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



COMMISSIONERS
Josh Maxwell
Marian D. Moskowitz
Eric M. Roe

PLANNING COMMISSION
Government Services Center, Suite 270
601 Westtown Road
P. O. Box 2747
West Chester, PA 19380-0990
(610) 344-6285 Fax (610) 344-6515

Chester County Environmental and Energy Advisory Board

Note Change of Location to Suite 270

Hybrid Meeting – GSC Suite 270/Zoom

Government Services Center

January 22, 2025

AGENDA

- 2:30 p.m. 1. CALL TO ORDER
A. Welcome and thank you to past members *Paul Spiegel, Chair*
- 2:35 p.m. 2. ACTION ITEMS
A. Appointment of 2025 Officers *Nominating Committee*
B. Adoption of October 23, 2024 Minutes *EEAB Chair*
- 2:45 p.m. 3. DISCUSSION ITEMS
A. EEAB Subcommittee Reports
1) Environmental Subcommittee *Seung Ah Byun, Subcommittee Chair*
a. EAC meeting recap
2) Clean Energy Subcommittee *Kevin Warren, Subcommittee Chair*
B. Update on 2025 Sustainability Summit *Rachael Griffith*
C. Transportation Improvement Inventory and Priority Projects *Brian Styche*
- 3:30 p.m. 4. UPDATES AND COMMENTS
A. Review Department Update Document *EEAB Chair*
B. Planning Commission Acting Director’s Report *Carol Stauffer*
C. Sustainability Director’s Report *Rachael Griffith*
D. Facilities Director’s Report *George Martynick*
E. Other Updates from the Board *Board Members*
F. Public Comment
- 4:00 p.m. 5. ADJOURNMENT

Next quarterly meeting – April 23, 2025

Attachments:

Draft October 23, 2024 Minutes
2025 Sustainability Summit Concept
Department Updates – Jan. 2025



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Environmental and Energy Advisory Board
Government Services Center Suite 351E/Zoom

October 23, 2024
Hybrid meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Paul Spiegel, Chair; Carol DeWolf, Vice-Chair; Brian O’Leary, Secretary; Steve Krug; George Martynick; Warren W. Messerschmidt; Britnee Sanseverino; Sarah Sharp; Dave Stauffer; Jim Wylie.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Ann Colby-Cummings; Joseph DiRocco; Kevin Warren; Wyatt Williams.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Stephen Buck; Geoff Creary; Rachael Griffith, Kate Hutelmyer, Gene Huller, Ryan Mawhinney; Carol Stauffer, Sally Warren.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: None

CALL TO ORDER:

The Environmental and Energy Advisory Board meeting, held in the Government Services Center in Suite 351E and via Zoom video/audio on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, was called to order at 2:30 P.M. by Chair, Paul Spiegel.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of July 24, 2024, Minutes:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 24, 2024, MEETING WAS MADE BY MR. MESSERSCHMIDT, SECONDED BY MR. O’LEARY, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

Resignation of Secretary

Mr. O’Leary, Secretary, announced his retirement from the County Planning Commission, and therefore as a member of this board. Mr. O’Leary said the new Executive Director would automatically become a part of this board as an Ex-Officio member.

Election of Secretary

Discussion on the election of Secretary was deferred to the next meeting when a new Planning Commission Director may be on board. NO ACTION TAKEN.

Appointment of Nominating Committee

MR. O’LEARY MADE A MOTION TO NOMINATE: CAROL DEWOLF, STEVE KRUG, and SEUNG AH BYUN, TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE, SECONDED BY MR. SPIEGEL AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. De Wolfe recommended the Nominating Committee meet before the next EEAB meeting in January 2025.

Adoption of 2025 Meeting Dates

The proposed 2025 meeting dates were presented as: quarterly on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 2:30-4:00 pm – January 22, April 23, July 23, October 22, 2025.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2025 MEETING DATES WAS MADE BY MR. MARTYNICK, SECONDED BY MR. WYLIE, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD. MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Subcommittee Reports

Clean Energy Subcommittee:

Mr. Wylie gave a summary of this committee's activities. The Local Government Climate Action Team (also referred to as the municipal cohort), is working on an Energy Efficiency Ordinance Toolkit, with sample ordinances and guidelines.

Upcoming events include the Heat Pump Info Session by the Smart Energy Initiative on November 7, 2024; and an Electric School Bus Program by Gen180 and the Sierra Club on November 14, 2024.

Other updates included the Solar for All program and the PASolar for Schools program, upcoming/new programs to incentivize going solar. This committee plans some outreach to ensure Chester County Schools are aware of the program. Mr. Warren noted that PA Senator Carolyn Comitta's office is doing some outreach to county school districts. Ms. Sanseverino said PECO just launched a residential rebate for solar energy (<https://www.peco.com/ways-to-save/for-your-home/rebates-discounts/solar-rebates.>)

Environmental Subcommittee:

Ms. Griffith reported that the committee met and focused on two topics: municipal open space funds, how they are used, especially other than purchasing land and easements; and how this board can support municipal Environmental Advisory Councils, or EACs. The subcommittee would like the Planning Commission to create a fact sheet to share examples of all the ways open space funds can be used.

Regarding county support for EACs, Ms. Griffith reviewed findings from an EAC survey conducted earlier this year. Ms. Griffith thinks EACs could help in connecting with HOAs to gain a better relationship with their municipality. Ms. Griffith will move forward with hosting a meeting for Chester County EACs.

Discussion on open space ballot questions for the election on November 5, 2024. Mr. Stauffer added that there is a need to help municipalities understand they can use open space funds for a range of things, not just purchasing open space. Mr. O'Leary stated Ms. Griffith reached out to all municipalities to support their open space policy development and planning; but the county does not get involved with municipal taxation decisions.

Presentation:

Steve Buck, Trails Planner for the Planning Commission, gave a presentation on the Chester County Trails Master Plan. The project was partially funded by a grant from PA DCNR and seeks to promote the development of a cohesive countywide network of public trails. The plan's recommendations include key trail opportunities based on six goal areas: network growth, connectivity, accessibility and equity, economic development, protection and appreciation, and safety. The plan identifies a set of trail catalyst projects and includes various resources intended to

assist the County, municipalities, and other partners with trail design, planning, management, and implementation. The 2024 draft Trails Master Plan is available for public review [here](#).

Ms. Griffith provided an overview of the Planning Commission's 2025 work program related to sustainability initiatives. Mr. O'Leary mentioned that the 2025 work program will also focus on historic preservation, housing affordability, transportation projects and trails expansion, in addition to comprehensive plan guidance for municipalities.

Ms. De Wolf requested recommendations from the board for the first CCATO Municipal Sustainability Award, for work a municipality accomplished in 2024.

UPDATES AND COMMENTS:

Planning Commission Director's Report

Mr. O'Leary shared copies of the Planning Commission's new Landscapes3 Design Guides, which discuss design and planning principles in different contexts, and noted that Smart Growth is essential for sustainable approaches to land use.

Sustainability Director's Report

Ms. Griffith introduced the new sustainability planner, Ryan Mawhinney, and Geoff Creary, the new Design and Technology Director. A new planning committee will be forming to plan the 2025 Sustainability Summit. There is a new county-wide campaign sign recycling event after this busy election season. The sustainability ordinance toolkit will soon be shared with municipalities through a workshop. The Planning Commission is working on a Tree List after repeated requests, and there will be a focus on native trees.

Facilities Director's Report

Mr. Martynick announced the county has accepted a grant for energy efficiency initiatives, including the development of an energy strategy plan for county facilities. He provided a status report on EV charging stations for county fleet and for public access. The multi-county Sustainable Energy Partnership with surrounding counties has revealed that the County will need to cut back its energy footprint. The electricity procurement agreement and provider will go into effect January 2025. Facilities settled on a new multi-use facility, mostly for the Coroner, at Oaklands Corporate Center.

Updates from the Board

Mr. Williams shared that West Whiteland Township was awarded two grants for solar energy projects.

Mr. Wylie added that former Chester County Coroner, Dr. Christina VandePol, will be presenting on, "Counting Climate Deaths" on October 24, 2024.

Mr. Krug shared there are a lot of state funding opportunities for municipalities and he will share them with Ms. Griffith. Mr. O'Leary added that the Planning Commission's website has a listing of municipal grant opportunities that is updated regularly.

Ms. Sharp shared the Brandywine Creek Greenway Strategic Action Plan was updated with an inventory of all the projects that will enhance this waterway.

Mr. Warren shared that he is encouraged after attending a Decarbonizing Tall Buildings conference sponsored by ASHRAE (international society of heating, refrigerating and air-conditioning professionals) in New York City, as there is more attention being paid to planning for new weather models and how to adjust new construction for rising temperature forecasts.

Mr. Krug mentioned several upcoming events sponsored by the Smart Energy Initiative of Southeastern PA.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

The next quarterly meeting will be on January 22, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 4:30 PM. WAS MADE BY MR. O'LEARY AND SECONDED BY MR. MARTYNICK AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Stauffer, AICP
Acting Secretary

CJS/RG/saw

DRAFT

Conservation District

- Pursuing grant funding for municipal lawn-to-meadow conversion projects for 2026 installation (if funding is awarded).
- Administering and assisting local programs promoting tree plantings such as Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership (through 2025), Trees for Watersheds (in perpetuity), CREP (in perpetuity).
- Planning and implementation of agricultural best management practices to reach water quality goals, with a focus on countywide ACAP projects and Chesapeake Bay watershed specific CAP projects.
- Overseeing the completion of two federally-funded flood mitigation projects in Tredyffrin Township. Both began construction in Q4. The EWP project is to stabilize the streambank alongside a residential property. The ARPA project is a neighborhood-wide infiltration trench installation to reduce significant flooding downslope of Bair Road.

Parks + Preservation

- Preservation staff have started to look at ways to repurpose sub-grant programs (Brandywine Headwaters Preservation Program) to align with goals of the County's Climate Action Plan. Next step is to develop a one-page summary of the re-worked program.
- Parks staff has prepared a Draft consultant RFP to prepare a resource management plan for Nottingham County Park. Funding for consultant work is approved as part of 2025 Parks operating budget.
- Parks staff coordinated with Stroud Water Research Center to install a 12.5-acre riparian buffer along French Creek in Warwick County Park. Work included removal of invasive plants, cutting down dead ash trees, and the installation of over 1,000 native trees and shrubs.

Planning

- Planning Sustainability Summit for 2025
- Working with Clean Energy Subcommittee to complete a municipal toolkit on regulating and incentivizing a transition to clean energy through local ordinances.
- Awarded funding from DCNR to launch an Open Space Accelerator mini-grant program which will provide funding for quick implementation-focused plans to advance existing municipal open space goals. Working on contracting logistics and promotion, as well as a pilot project with North Coventry Township.
- Working with the Prison, Pocopson Home, and Youth Center to develop a sustainable landscape management plan for the 200+ acre campus.
- Worked with Facilities and Parks + Preservation to collect campaign signs for recycling. Collected over 1,000lbs of metal stakes and hundreds of pounds of plastic film and corrugated plastic.

Facilities

- Installation complete for 4 chargers for county fleet vehicles at Pocopson Home, GSC, Chester County Library. Charger at Prison will be installed in 2025.
- Developing an RFP for a +/- 190kW rooftop solar array at 313 W. Market St. for installation in 2025. To be funded by EECBG funds and federal direct pay credit.
- Working with the West Chester Green Team to establish a native plan garden in front of the Justice Center.

Emergency Services

- Beginning the process of updating the county's Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan aims to identify risks and vulnerabilities that affect Chester County and develops strategies and priorities to avoid or minimize the effects of those risks. Once adopted by the county and municipalities, the hazard mitigation plan serves as a guiding document toward increased community resilience and opens the door to state and federal mitigation grant opportunities.

Water Resources

- The Brandywine Flood Study - identifying opportunities for flood mitigation throughout the watershed (draft public release on 1/16/25)
- Precipitation Analysis - estimate the increase that may occur in the future for storms of varying frequency and duration.

- New clearinghouse for ChesCo water resources info – FloodTools, Drought Dashboard, Water Conditions Interactive Map, and more
- Initiative to name “unnamed” streams – interactive map in beta version
- Voluntary municipal stormwater infrastructure GIS database – in progress
- Combining green infrastructure installation with recreational access upgrades at Chambers Lake (coming soon)
- Additional watershed-scale flood studies (coming soon)

2025 Chester County Sustainability Summit and Expo

Potential Dates: Sat. 5/3, Sat. 5/10, Sat. 5/17

Expected time: 10 am-2 pm

Goals:

1. Demonstrate widespread local support for sustainability.
2. Provide actionable steps individuals can take to advance county sustainability policy, and connect attendees to other individuals, organizations, and experts that can help them implement these actions.

Audience: General public

Venue: TBD. Potentially a centrally-located school (Downingtown SD, Coatesville SD)

COMPONENTS:

1. **Presentation** (90 mins)

Each presentation would have a "toolkit" take-away – steps for how to easily do the thing, and get more info on it.

These sessions would be recorded but would not be offered as a hybrid event.

- a. Overview of Sustainability in Chesco and county policies
- b. Owning or leasing an electric vehicle
- c. Heat pumps/electrified heating
- d. Solar AND can't do solar where you live? Here's how to buy solar energy
- e. Something related to planting/landscaping
- f. Plastic- what you can do to deplastify your life?? (Note: I don't think we have any county policy around this topic, so might not be appropriate?)

EEAB "Asks":

- Need help fleshing out the presentation topics and presenters
- Any volunteers to help think through/create the toolkits?

2. **Children's programming** (90 mins- concurrent with Educational Session)

Ideas: hands on, educational topics (planting, recycling sorting, etc.), art with trash, science experiments, skits/play, babysitting

Idea is to make parents with young children able to attend, and to provide concurrent education and activities for kids. *Note: we're still looking into whether this will be possible.*

3. **Networking with Neighbors** (2.5 hrs, after presentations)

- a. EV car show- EV owners hanging out with their cars in a designated part of the parking lot
- b. Several ChesCo residents who have installed solar (some solar leases, some purchase the system, some battery storage, a business?)
- c. Several ChesCo residents who have installed ducted and ductless heat pumps, heat pump dryers/electric water heaters, induction stoves, etc.
- d. Several ChesCo residents who converted lawn to meadow in different contexts (urban, suburban, rural)
- e. Plastics/zero waste/recycling??

EEAB "Ask": Do you know anyone who would be a good person to share their personal experience on one or more of these topics?

4. **Sustainability Expo** (4 hrs- Entire time)

- a. Businesses related to each of the topics above (charge to attend)
- b. Non-profits related to each of the topics above (no charge to attend)
- c. Volunteer corner- opportunities to get involved in your community (no charge to attend)
- d. Food: hors doeuvres/finger foods, drinks, composting

EEAB "Ask": Do you have suggestions for vendors/exhibitors/organizations to ask to table?

Follow-Up Workshops for Specific Audiences

Timeframe: Late spring/summer 2025, 2-3 hours per workshop

Goal: Provide specific audiences with a space for connecting with experts and peers around implementing a key sustainability action to help them implement that action in their own organization.

Audience	Message/topic ideas	Potential Partner(s)
School board members/ school leadership	Sustainability planning for schools, solar proposal and pro forma, EV school bus proposal and pro forma	CCIU, DelVal Assn of school biz officials
HOAs	Creating a sustainability action plan, sustainable landscaping, CCR audit	CAI
Retirement Communities	Creating a sustainability action plan, sustainable landscaping, organizing around sustainability	Kendal at Longwood
Municipalities	Integrating sustainability/energy transition into ordinances and plans	CCATO